

CIRM allocates \$25 million to overcome immune rejection of stem cell transplantation therapies

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San Diego, Calif., June 22, 2010 – The Governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state stem cell agency created by proposition 71, today approved \$25 million to fund 19 projects intended to overcome immune rejection of transplanted stem cells.

Transplanting cells derived from stem cells to replace lost or damaged tissue is one of the great promises of stem cell research. However, the possibility exists that those cells could be rejected by the immune system much like a transplanted organ. The projects funded by these awards will develop strategies for overcoming rejection, eliminating potential barriers to moving stem cell therapies to the clinic. Breakthroughs developed in these research projects could also benefit the entire transplantation field.

"In writing proposition 71, we anticipated the need to overcome the immune response in order to fulfill one of the ultimate promises of regenerative medicine, replacing or repairing tissues with stem cells," said Robert Klein, chair of the CIRM Governing Board. "With these awards, CIRM-funded scientists will be advancing the critical medical technologies that are essential to prevent the immune system from rejecting life-saving transplants. If successful, these experiments will place California researchers in a world leadership position on solutions to prevent immune system rejection of cellular therapies. These projects give great hope to patients and families of people with chronic disease, who look to stem cell research as their best hope for a cure."

CIRM President Alan Trounson who pioneered the integration of immunology and stem cells at Monash University in Victoria, Australia, has actively encouraged a focus for research on the development of strategies that could complement the stem cell transplantation therapies. "With these innovative immune transplantation focused awards we will be making major strides toward eliminating the potential barrier of rejection and dangerous immune suppression that slows the application of stem cell therapies for the benefit of the people of California and the world," he said.

Two of the awards include a collaboration with partners at Monash University whose portion of the award will be funded by the Australian state of Victoria. The Victorian government has committed \$1.2 million toward funding these projects.

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The board also approved the concept proposal for the Basic Biology III Awards. These awards will follow the Basic Biology I and II awards, which provided a combined total of \$38 million to fund 28 projects making stem cell discoveries that lay the foundation for future therapies. The Basic Biology III RFA is expected to be released in August, 2010.

At the meeting, Chief Operating Officer John Robson updated board members about CIRM's financial position, and projected the budget through a final round of funding projected to take place in either 2014 or 2017, depending on how aggressively the board funds new projects.

Stem Cell Transplantation Immunology Awards

Application Number	PI Name	Institution	Approved Funding
RM1-01725	Robert Negrin	Stanford University	\$1,427,980
RM1-01730	David Raulet	University of California, Berkeley	\$958,808
RM1-01703	Jeffrey Bluestone	University of California, San Francisco	\$1,152,768
RM1-01702	Mark Anderson	University of California, San Francisco	\$1,314,090
RM1-01720	Martin Marsala	University of California, San Diego	\$1,387,800

RM1-01729	Anjana Rao	La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology	\$1,503,998
RM1-01739	Kenneth Weinberg Australian Partner Claude C. Bernard	Stanford University Monash University	\$1,415,836
RM1-01735	Terrence Town	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	\$1,472,634
RM1-01706	Christopher Contag	Stanford University	\$1,447,956
RM1-01711	Basil Hantash	Escape Therapeutics, Inc	\$1,453,040
RM1-01707	Gay Crooks	University of California, Los Angeles	\$1,357,398
RM1-01709	Nicholas Gascoigne	Scripps Research Institute	\$1,746,684
RM1-01732	Ellen Robey	University of California, Berkeley	\$1,079,393
RM1-01718	Tippi MacKenzie	University of California, San Francisco	\$1,324,229
RM1-01724	William Murphy	University of California, Davis	\$1,317,569
RM1-01743	Yang Xu	University of California, San Diego	\$1,193,292
RM1-01717	Jeanne Loring Australian Partner Ban-Hock Toh	Scripps Research Institute Monash University	\$1,269,844
RM1-01710	Husein Hadeiba	Palo Alto Institute for Research and Education, Inc.	\$885,475
RM1-01733	Judith Shizuru	Stanford University	\$1,403,557
Total			\$25,112,351

For a list of all institutions funded by CIRM with funding levels, please visit: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/InstitutionList>

For a list of all funded CIRM grants, please visit: [/grants](#)

About CIRM CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 364 research, training and facility grants totaling more than \$1 billion, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. Estimates suggest that these grants already awarded will generate tens of thousands of job-years of employment in the state.

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